

Resolution No.:	<u>19-565</u>
Introduced:	<u>July 21, 2020</u>
Adopted:	<u>July 28, 2020</u>

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: County Council

SUBJECT: Special Appropriation to the Fiscal Year 2021 Operating Budget
Montgomery County Government
COVID-19 Human Services and Community Assistance Non-Departmental
Account (NDA); \$5,596,115 (Source of Funds: \$4,643,567 Federal Grant and
\$952,548 General Fund Reserves
Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar (For Our Health and Wellbeing)

Background

1. Section 308 of the County Charter provides that a special appropriation is an appropriation which states that it is necessary to meet an unforeseen disaster or other emergency, or to act without delay in the public interest. Each special appropriation shall be approved by not less than six Councilmembers. The Council may approve a special appropriation at any time after public notice by news release. Each special appropriation shall specify the source of funds to finance it.
2. A new coronavirus disease, named COVID-19, appeared in China in December 2019 and spread extremely quickly. On March 11, 2020 the World Health Organization declared the disease a pandemic. By July 18, 2020 there were more than 3.7 million confirmed cases and over 140,000 confirmed deaths in the United States. On July 18, the State of Maryland reported 77,206 confirmed cases and 3,238 confirmed deaths statewide. In Montgomery County there were 16,251 confirmed cases and 730 confirmed deaths.
3. Communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that as of June 12, 2020, Hispanic or Latino persons have a rate of hospitalization or death that is more than four times that of a non-Hispanic Person. Disparities are present in Montgomery County. At the County Council's July 14 session, the County Health Officer provided data showing that in the top 10 zip codes with the highest number of cases, the percent of positive tests in May for Whites was 16.1% compared to 67.6% for Hispanics and in June was 2.7% for Whites compared to 28.3% for Hispanics. In June, 73% of new cases were Hispanic residents and Hispanic residents accounted for 37% of all confirmed cases.

4. Social determinants of health including lack of access to healthcare, the high percent of people working in front-facing essential service jobs, crowded housing, and chronic health conditions underly these disparities. Addressing these disparities requires a comprehensive approach to outreach, testing, contact tracing, clinical follow-up, and case management with wrap-around services and supports.
5. Since its founding in 2000, the Latino Health Initiative has worked to address the health, language, economic and professional disparities impacting Latinos in Montgomery County. Its mission is to contribute to the development and implementation of an integrated, coordinated, and culturally and linguistically competent health and wellness system that supports, values, and respects Latino families and communities. Programs and services are provided in collaboration with the County's community-based health and social services non-profit organizations. These partnerships build relationships with communities and can reach people in ways that government cannot, especially in times when the Federal government has made many people fearful of seeking any government help. Engaging with these partners is critical to addressing the impacts of COVID-19.
6. Since the first weeks of the pandemic, Councilmembers Alborno and Navarro have urged the County to have a comprehensive and culturally appropriate response to the impacts of COVID-19 on the Latino community. They engaged with the Latino Health Steering Committee requesting their input. The Latino Health Steering Committee and partner organizations proposed the Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar (For Our Health and Wellbeing) Initiative. The Initiative addresses outreach, education, testing, tracing, clinical follow-up, case management, coordination of mental health services, and access to food and other assistance through a system of Community HUBs. The Latino Health Steering Committee will monitor and evaluate output and outcome data.
7. Public notice of this special appropriation was provided and a public hearing was held.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

A special appropriation to the FY21 Operating Budget of the Montgomery County Government, in the amount of \$5,596,115 is approved as follows:

	<u>Personnel Expense</u>	<u>Operating Expense</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>Source of Funds</u>
COVID-19 Human Services and Community Assistance NDA	\$0	\$4,643,567	\$4,643,567	Federal Grant
COVID-19 Human Services and Community Assistance NDA	\$0	\$ 952,548	\$ 952,548	General Fund Reserves

These funds must be used by the Executive to implement the **Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar (For Our Health and Wellbeing) Initiative**. The Executive must provide staff support for the overall administration and coordination of the Initiative and must implement it in collaboration with the Latino Health Steering Committee and its community-based partner organizations.

Up to \$662,808 must be used for the overall administration and coordination of the program. The funds provide full-year funding for a program manager and three team coordinators and associated operating expenses. In addition, information technology (IT) support for program components is included.

Up to \$125,504 must be used to fund data management including a data management coordinator and a report writer. This focus area will manage the systems and data needed to monitor the ongoing service delivery and the data needed for evaluation of the outcomes for the Latino community.

Up to \$250,000 must be used for Communications promotional materials that are culturally appropriate and targeted to reach specific communities throughout the County. Campaign materials and the use of multiple forms of media and advertising are funded.

Up to \$447,951 must be used for Outreach and Engagement that will staff a Spanish speaking health navigation phone line as well as a cadre of health promoters. A volunteer manager will work to mobilize volunteers to reach into the Latino community.

Up to \$397,881 must be used for clinical follow-up. A team including a clinician, Registered Nurse, emergency medical technician, care coordinator, patients support specialist, and receptionist will follow-up on all positive case cases to assist with care coordination, connection to medical and other support services, and patient education.

The Department of Health and Human Services will support the Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar Initiative through a collaborative effort that will ensure there is a cadre of linguistically and culturally competent contact tracers who are affiliated with trusted community partners. This will increase the ability to engage people who have tested positive and who may be fearful of government and will increase the probability that these residents will respond to requests for information. Effective contract tracing will help reduce the spread of the disease. The Executive branch should pursue FEMA reimbursement for all costs related to the implementation of this component of the program, to the extent that those costs are eligible for reimbursement.

Up to \$2,319,613 must be used for a robust case management program for residents who test positive and also for their family members and residents who test negative but are distressed by the overall COVID-19 health and economic emergency. Case managers and supervisors will be deployed with lower case ratios to serve those in high distress. Operating expenses for the case managers and supervisors are funded. Included is \$800,000 in emergency assistance.

Up to \$31,625 must be used to fund the coordination of mental health services by connecting residents with appropriate community-based and County-funded services.

Up to \$1,360,733 will be used to sustain and increase the number of Community HUBs to provide easily accessible centers for the distribution of food, diapers, cleaning supplies and other essentials, as well as connections to community-based support services. A portion of the funds will be used to hire staff that may include a director, coordinators, and assistants and who may be hired for a full year. Funds may support costs associated rent, refrigeration, food, and other operating expenses for five months. The County will offer access to its fleet of vehicles to support the program. The HUB model mobilizes volunteers. Food and supplies for distribution will be provided through a combination of this funding and donations. The HUBs created through this appropriation will serve as infrastructure for the delivery of assistance to all residents in areas and zip codes that have been impacted by COVID-19. This appropriation is not expected to provide all the funding that is needed to establish a system of HUBs. The Executive branch should pursue FEMA reimbursement for all costs related to the implementation of this component of the program, to the extent that those costs are eligible for reimbursement.

The Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar's COVID-19 testing component will be implemented in collaboration with the overall testing program administered by the Department of Health and Human Services. It is critical that testing protocols are culturally and linguistically appropriate and that the sites and times of testing are responsive to the realities of the work hours of Latino residents. Sites must address barriers to transportation and strategies using a mobile van should be employed. The Executive branch should pursue FEMA reimbursement for all costs related to the implementation of this component of the program, to the extent that those costs are eligible for reimbursement.

The Executive will provide a written progress report on the implementation of Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar every two weeks beginning August 14, 2020 until January 1, 2021.

This comprehensive framework serves as a model for working collaboratively to reach and address the needs of other communities that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. The Executive branch, with a lead from the Department of Health and Human Services, should engage with the African American Health Program, Asian American Health Initiative, the County minority liaisons through the County's Office of Community Partnerships, and community partners serving other groups with social determinants that increase the likelihood that they are negatively impacted by COVID-19. Certain service infrastructure, such as the creation of additional Community HUBs can be integrated into plans to address the needs of others.

The County will seek reimbursement from the Federal Government for all eligible costs associated with this initiative.

This appropriation is needed to act in response to a public health or safety emergency and to act without delay in the public interest.

This is a correct copy of Council action.



Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council